

CRWR 211A: Intro Poetry Workshop

Instructor Information

- Instructor: Grace Arenas
- Class Meeting Time: MWF 11:00 a.m.-11:50 a.m., LA307
- Mailbox: LA 133
- Office: Corbin 349
- Phone: (406) 243-5231
- Office Hours: MWF 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.
- Email: grace.arenas@umontana.edu
- Course Website: poetrypeople2016.wordpress.com

Course Description

Many may consider it difficult to justify being a poet in today's world. Inevitable questions such as *can you even have a career as a poet?* and *do poems really do anything? do they matter?* will be asked of those of us who choose to study, read, and compose poetry. Fortunately, for that group, the answers are abundantly clear.

In this class, we will decide for ourselves what exactly the "justification" for contemporary poetry is, as well as how we fit into that world. We will read contemporary poets extensively in order to discover the many projects they are undertaking, to find individual voices we respond to, and to use these voices as inspiration for our own work. We will also compose multiple poems a week in order to develop our individual approaches to poetry. Above all, we will attempt over the course of the semester to find our unique poetic voice.

Learning Outcomes

- Acquire foundational skills in reading, discussing and writing poetry
- Demonstrate an understanding of the terminology and concepts that apply to poetry
- Practice the art of writing and revising poetry
- Learn to critique the quality of their own work and that of fellow students.

Required Course Texts

- David Orr, *Beautiful and Pointless*
- Jill Alexander Essbaum, *Harlot*
- Amy Gerstler, *Medicine*
- Eduardo Corral, *Slow Lightning*

(additional readings will be provided as handouts/links)

Other Requirements

- Notebook for in-class writing/note-taking
- Sturdy folder or binder for end-of-semester portfolio
- Computer access for checking course website/watching videos of poetry readings

Class Procedure

Generally, our week will follow this structure:

1.) On Mondays, you will turn in a poem draft for workshop.
2.) On Wednesdays, I will give you a packet of your poems with several poems indicated for workshop. While you should prepare comments/feedback on these specific poems, I encourage you to read **all** of your fellow classmates' work.
3.) On Friday, we will workshop the selected poems from the packet and discuss the prompt for next week.

You will have additional assignments, both in-class and for homework, that will require you to write a poem. This means that in a given week, you may be writing multiple poems other than those you receive a Friday prompt for. While you may submit all of them to the workshop packet, you must **at least** include the Friday prompt poem, i.e., an in-class exercise that results in a poem is not a substitute for the prompted piece. I will clarify whether a homework assignment given on a Friday is or is not that week's prompt.

General Class Expectations

- All readings must be completed by the assigned date.
- All writing must be completed by the assigned date.
- Poems to be workshopped will be read and commented on in advance of class.
- All homework assignments will be typed and printed in advance of class.
- Students will attend class consistently and participate actively in class discussion.
- **Students will be respectful of one another during workshop.**
- Students will meet with instructor during office hours to discuss their work.
- Students will not use cell phones during class.

'Attending Readings'

Students are expected to attend **at least** 2 poetry readings on or off campus throughout the semester. I will inform you of upcoming readings on a week-to-week basis. You will type a 1-2 page response to these readings in which you consider the poet's work, their approach to reading/performance, and how both of these factors might influence you. At least one of these response papers must be completed before Thanksgiving break.

Attendance Policy

More than three absences from a M-W-F class will compromise your grade. Six or more absences from a M-W-F class will result in a failing grade. Here's the breakdown:

4th absence: final grade drops one letter grade

5th absence: final grade drops one letter grade

6th absence: final grade is an F

Without attending class, you cannot adequately participate in discussion, collaboration with classmates, and providing workshop feedback. Personal situations and required university events may arise that, on a rare occasion, make it impossible for you to be in class.

Remember, however, that's why a few absences are allowed; **please reserve those for emergencies.**

Please note that instances of poor time management on your part do not constitute an emergency. If you must miss class, **you are responsible** for obtaining any handouts or assignments for the class. Make sure you talk with me **in advance** if you are worried about meeting a deadline or missing a class.

Participation Policy

You must consistently attend class in order to maintain an acceptable participation grade; in class, you must be prepared to comment on readings, ask relevant questions, and provide constructive feedback during workshops. Missing class or arriving late to class severely detracts from your participation grade. Essentially, be prepared, show up on time, and speak!

Again, if you miss class, **it is your responsibility** to ask for any handouts or assignments you might have missed. Email, ask after class, or come to my office hours-1 will not track you down.

Late Work Policy

Late work of any kind will not be accepted for credit. If you would like my feedback on a piece you have turned in late, you may come to my office hours and discuss it, with the understanding that this does not excuse lateness. However, it will show your dedication to the class and allow us an opportunity to revise your work.

If you know you will be unable to attend class or that you will be unable to access a printer prior to class, you may email me that day's assignment. **However**, the assignment must be emailed **prior** to the beginning of class, otherwise it will be considered late. This should not become a habit by any means; the best thing to do to ensure you do not lose credit for late work is to prepare and print it to turn in on the due date.

Grading Policy

- 50% of your final grade will be based on your active participation (this includes participation in class discussion, preparing all in-class and homework assignments on time, preparing for/participating in workshop sessions)

- 40% of your final grade will be based on your final portfolio (all poems must have undergone revision based on workshop feedback/conference feedback from me/your own revision work)
- 10% of your final grade will be based on your responses to the readings you attend

Academic Conduct

You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to avoid academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, please review the Conduct Code and talk with your instructor. The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: "plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." Academic honesty is highly valued in the University community and acts of plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

This syllabus is subject to change